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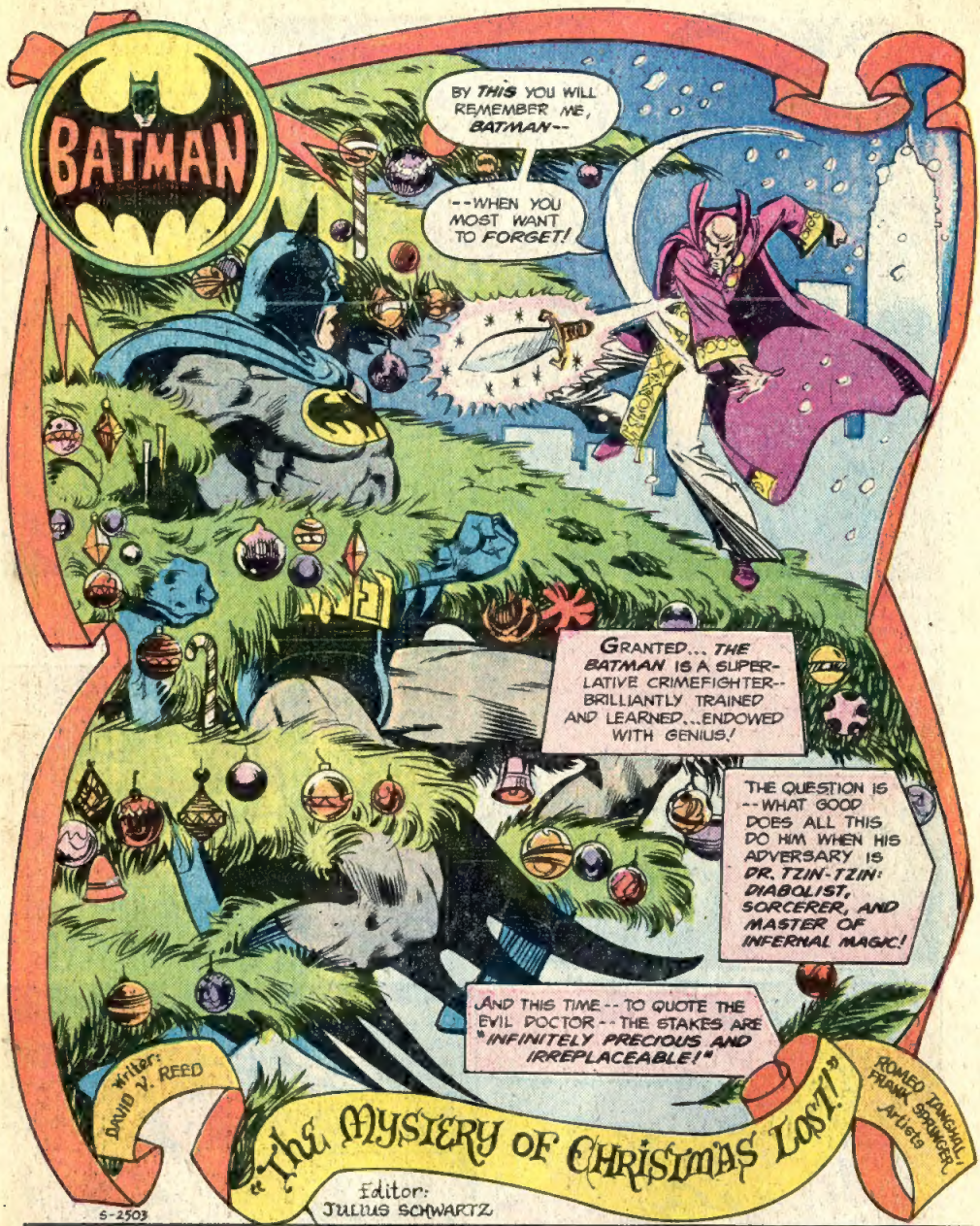
BATMAN
BY THIS YOU WILL REMEMBER ME, BATMAN--
--WHEN YOU MOST WANT TO FORGET!
GRANTED... THE BATMAN IS A SUPERLATIVE CRIMEFIGHTER--BRILLIANTLY TRAINED AND LEARNED...ENDOWED WITH GENIUS!
THE QUESTION IS --WHAT GOOD DOES ALL THIS DO HIM WHEN HIS ADVERSARY IS DR. TZIN-TZIN: DIABOLIST, SORCERER, AND MASTER OF INFERNAL MAGIC!
AND THIS TIME -- TO QUOTE THE EVIL DOCTOR -- THE STAKES ARE "INFINITELY PRECIOUS AND IRREPLACEABLE!"
Writer: DAVID V. REED
"The Mystery of Christmas Lost!"
Artists: ROMEO TANGHAL, FRANK SPRUNGER
Editor: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
S-2503

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THIS IS A COLLECTOR'S ITEM--THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND--FROM THE PRIVATE ARCHIVES OF THE BATMAN...
A Portrait of Dr. Tzin-Tzin in the Gotham City Jail
Taken by Remote Control -December 17, 1976
December 23, 1976
The Malevolent Tzin-Tzin has been a prisoner for six days... in a specially monitored cell... completely insulated from all human contact.
EVERYTHING NORMAL, WARDEN! ALL SYSTEMS INDICATE DR. TZIN-TZIN IS SAFE AND SOUND!
GOOD! REMEMBER, ABSOLUTELY NO TV-SURVEILLANCE OF HIM!
IF HE WERE TO LOOK BACK AT US THROUGH THE LENS, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE MIGHT DO!
FOR SIX DAYS, THE DIABOLICAL WIZARD HAS BEEN KEPT FROM MOBILIZING THE FULL STRENGTH OF HIS ASTONISHING POWERS BY A RANDOM SERIES OF LIGHTS AND SOUNDS--
-- STIMULI JUST SUFFICIENT TO PREVENT THE COMPLETE CONCENTRATION OF MIND FROM WHICH HE GATHERS THE TSAL OR ENERGY FOR HIS MAGICAL PROWESS!
THEN... SOMETHING HAPPENS ... SOMETHING TOTALLY UNFORESEEN--A SMALL EVENT... INDEED A VERY SMALL EVENT...
--AN ANT HAS SOMEHOW FOUND A CREVICE INTO DR. TZIN TZIN'S CELL... A NOT UNCOMMON ANT... SOLENOPSIS MOLESTA--THE YELLOW-GOLDEN "THIEF" ANT!
BUT IT IS A LIVING ORGANISM--AND MINUTE ENOUGH TO BE SUSCEPTIBLE EVEN TO THE DRASTICALLY DIMINISHED POTENCY OF TZIN-TZIN!
AND IN THE INSTANT OF ITS APPEARANCE, THE ANT IS UNDER HIS CONTROL!

THE ANT SCURRIES AWAY... TO RETURN WITHIN MOMENTS -- LEADING A HORDE -- A GOLDEN RIVER OF ANTS!
AND EACH ANT IN THAT MULTITUDE -- EACH TINY INDIVIDUAL, INSTINCTIVELY DISCIPLINED AND INTELLIGENT -- KNOWS EXACTLY ITS PLACE AND ITS FUNCTION!

BUT THE NEXT INCREDIBLE MOMENT...

AND TO THE ROAR OF A GUN SALUTE -- DR. TZIN-TZIN EXITS IN A STYLE BEFITTING THE MYSTIC MASTER OF TIBET!

IT IS LATER, SUMMONED BY COMMISSIONER GORDON, THE BATMAN GRIMLY SURVEYS THE REMARKABLE SCENE IN THE CELL LATELY OCCUPIED BY TZIN-TZIN -- A TESTIMONIAL TO THE WIZARD'S ENDLESS RESOURCEFULNESS...
...AND A MOCKING SALUTATION FOR THE CAPED CRUSADER -- SPELLED OUT BY MASSED COLUMNS OF ANTS!
HOW COULD TZIN-TZIN SUDDENLY DISLODGE A 300 POUND STONE-BLOCK?
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO THE BATMAN AND GOTHAM CITY
WE HAD EVERY EVENTUALITY COVERED!
EVERY ONE BUT THESE LITTLE CREATURES...THESE OMNIVOROUS "THIEF" ANTS... WHICH TZIN-TZIN DIRECTED TO BAT AWAY THE MORTAR BETWEEN THE STONES!
THEN, ABSORBING THEIR COMBINED STRENGTH, THE REST WAS EASY!
ONCE HE WAS OUT IN THE OPEN, EVERYONE IN HIS RADIUS OF INFLUENCE BECAME A HELPLESS SOURCE OF FURTHER STOLEN ENERGY--
--ENERGY HE CAN MULTIPLY A THOUSAND-FOLD AS HE PLOTS HIS NEXT SPECTACULAR CAPER!
BATMAN-- TURN AROUND!
THE ANTS ARE MOVING!
THE MESSAGE! IT'S CHANGED INTO A QUESTION MARK!
AND IF I UNDERSTAND TZIN-TZIN'S WARPED MIND, THAT CHANGES HIS GREETING INTO A THREAT-- WITH A DEADLINE!
LIKE A TIME-BOMB -- SET TO EXPLODE ON CHRISTMAS DAY!
A CRIME?...ON CHRISTMAS DAY?
NO ORDINARY CRIME... NOTHING TO DO WITH WEALTH OR PLUNDER... BUT SOMETHING SPECIAL -- INSANELY SPECIAL--NOT ONLY FOR ME BUT FOR GOTHAM CITY!
AND WE HAVEN'T LONG TO WAIT!
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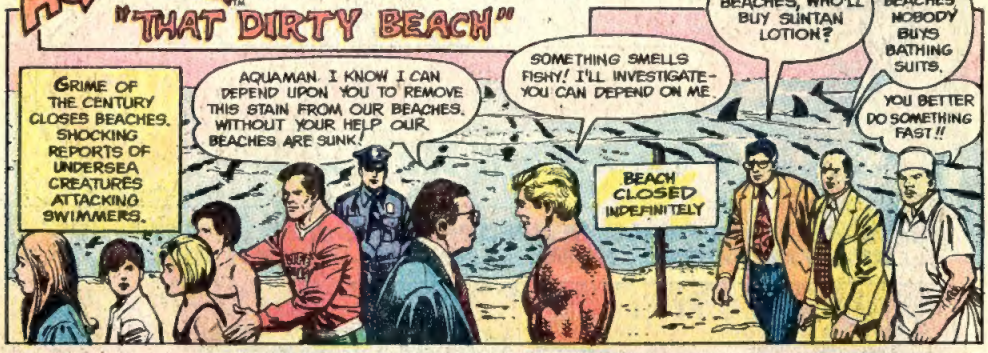
GRIME OF THE CENTURY CLOSES BEACHES. SHOCKING REPORTS OF UNDERSEA CREATURES ATTACKING SWIMMERS.
AQUAMAN. I KNOW I CAN DEPEND UPON YOU TO REMOVE THIS STAIN FROM OUR BEACHES. WITHOUT YOUR HELP OUR BEACHES ARE SUNK!
SOMETHING SMELLS FISHY! I'LL INVESTIGATE- YOU CAN DEPEND ON ME.
WITHOUT THE BEACHES, WHO'LL BUY SUNTAN LOTION?
NO BEACHES NOBODY BUYS BATHING SUITS.
YOU BETTER DO SOMETHING FAST!!
BEACH CLOSED INDEFINITELY

AQUAMAN, YOU LAND LOVER! HUMANS POLLUTE OUR HOMES, AND NOW I'M GETTING EVEN. IF YOU TAKE A STAND AGAINST ME, IT WILL BE YOUR OWN DOWNFALL.
SLUD-JAK, YOU'RE FIGHTING DIRTY!! BESIDES, TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT. NOW TRY MY RIGHT ON FOR SIZE.
BOOM!

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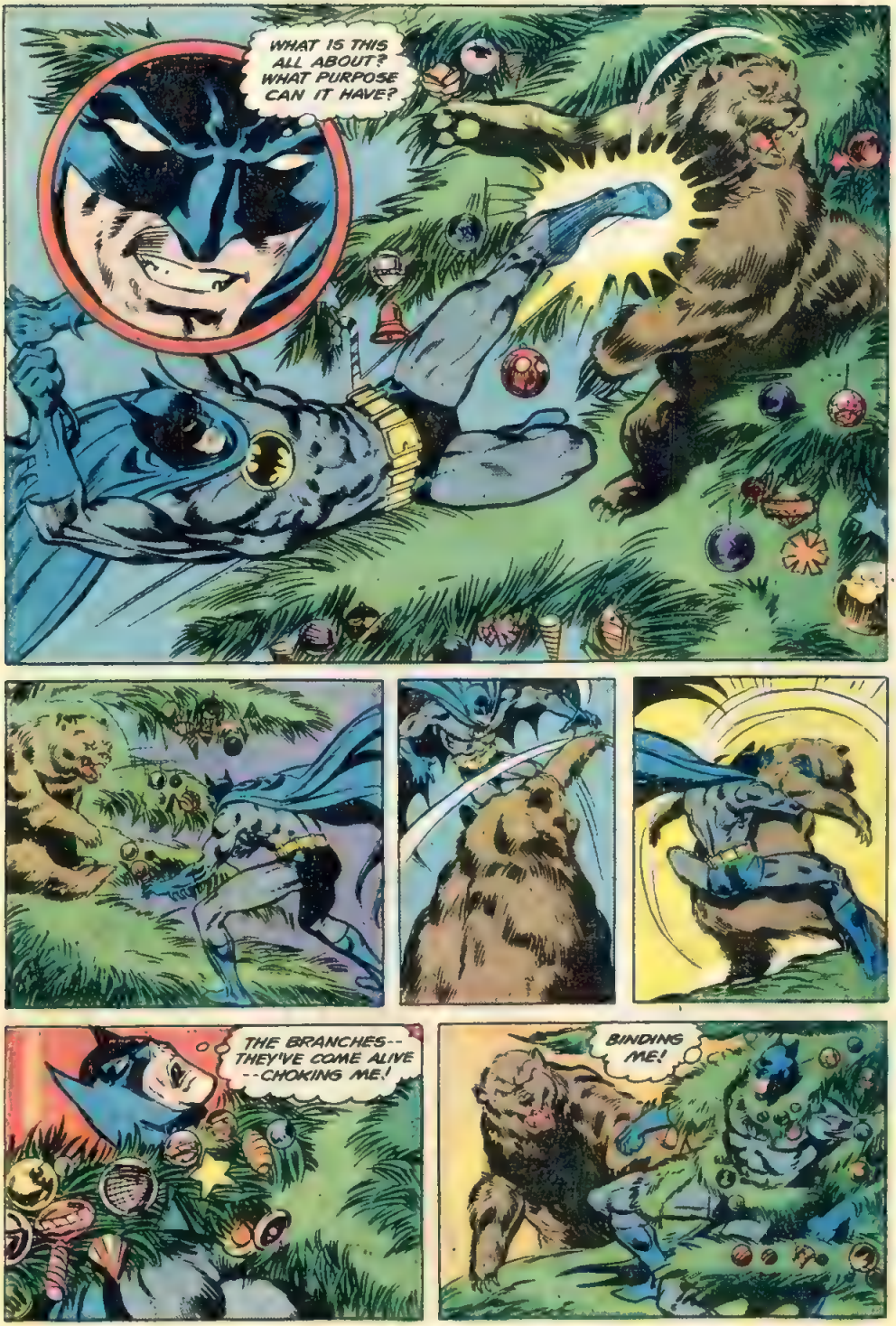
SUDDENLY--A RUSH OF WIND--FOLLOWED BY...
COME TO ME, PHURBA--KEEPER OF ALL ESSENCE--MAGIC DAGGER OF THE MIND!
AS SWIFTLY AS IT APPEARED--THE INVOKED SPIRIT IS VANISHED!
'TIS DONE! THE ELIXIR OF NEPENTHES!
THIS--TO REDRESS ALL MY WRONGS!
THIS--MY HOLIDAY GIFT FOR GOTHAM CITY!
AND THIS--ONE RADIANT, SPLENDOROUS DROP--FOR THE SIDDHA BATMAN!

THE EVENING DRAWS ON... GOTHAM CITY, DECKED OUT IN HOLIDAY FINERY, IS AT PEACE...
BUT TONIGHT, THE BATMAN'S METROPOLITAN PATROL TAKES ON A DREAD DIMENSION -- THE CERTAINTY OF IMPENDING DISASTER!
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN TOUCH AND GO BETWEEN TZIN-TZIN AND ME! I'VE WON, BUT BY THE SMALLEST OF MARGINS!
CHANGE ONE OF THOSE MARGINS, AND THAT EVIL MANIAC WOULD HAVE THE VICTORY SO VITAL TO HIS EGO!
MERRY CHRISTMAS
Seasons Greetings
CHRISTMAS
SUDDENLY, OVER THE POLICE BAND...
PANIC AT CITY HALL PLAZA--TREE-LIGHTING CEREMONY--THE TREE IS ON FIRE!
WHA...? NOT THAT TREE! IT'S COMPLETELY FLAME-PROOF!
THREE MINUTES LATER, THE BATMAN ARRIVES ON A SCENE OF EXTRAORDINARY CONFUSION--
IT'S INCREDIBLE! EVERYONE SAYS THE TREE WAS ON FIRE--BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF IT-- AND THAT TREE CAN'T BURN!
WHICH MEANS IT WASN'T FIRE!
WHATEVER IT LOOKED LIKE, IT WASN'T REAL!
NEXT INSTANT--!
--AND NEITHER IS THAT REAL!


WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? WHAT PURPOSE CAN IT HAVE?
THE BRANCHES-- THEY'VE COME ALIVE --CHOKING ME!
BINDING ME!

BATMAN, IF ONLY YOUR INTELLECT EQUALLED YOUR VALOR! EACH TIME YOU THINK YOURSELF MORE ABLE TO COPE WITH MY APPARITIONS --TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN REALITY AND CHIMERA!
BUT THAT IS MERELY ANOTHER OF YOUR ILLUSIONS!
POP
SURELY YOU MUST KNOW I COULD HAVE TORN YOU TO BITS! BUT MY VICTORY MUST BE OF THE MIND--
--THE MIND, BATMAN-- UNTIL, FINALLY HUMBLED, BROKEN IN YOUR HEART OF HEARTS--YOU RECOGNIZE ME AS YOUR MASTER!
THEREFORE, OUR FINAL CONTEST WILL TAKE PLACE IN MY REALM... THE WORLD OF THE SUBSTANTIAL... THE INTANGIBLE!
I AM GOING TO ROB THIS CITY OF SOMETHING INFINITELY PRECIOUS... IRREPLACEABLE... SOMETHING YOU CAN NEVER RECOVER--
--BECAUSE IT EXISTS ONLY IN THE MIND!
LOOK AT THIS, BATMAN!
IS IT REAL?
CONTINUED ON 31 PAGE FOLLOWING

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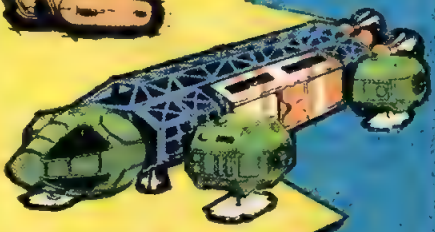

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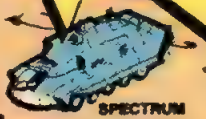

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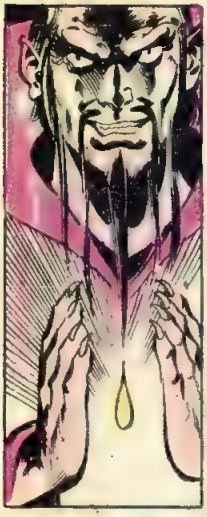
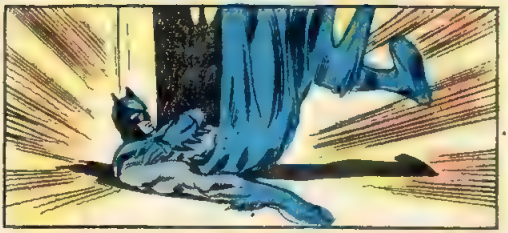
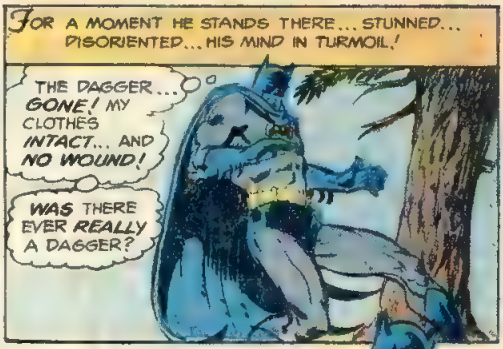


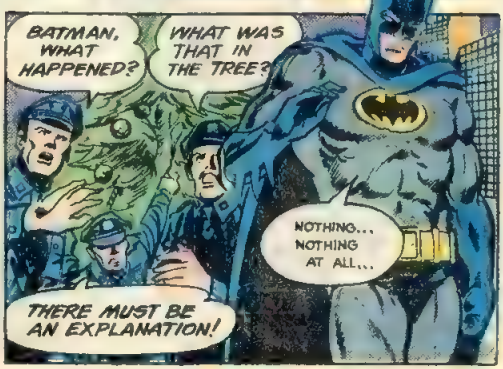
BY THIS YOU WILL REMEMBER ME--

--WHEN YOU MOST WANT TO FORGET!

AND THEN SUDDENLY, THE BATMAN IS FALLING-- AS THE ENTWINING BRANCHES RELEASE HIM-- THEN SMASH HIM DOWN!




FOR A MOMENT HE STANDS THERE... STUNNED... DISORIENTED... HIS MIND IN TURMOIL!
THE DAGGER... GONE! MY CLOTHES INTACT... AND NO WOUND!
WAS THERE EVER REALLY A DAGGER?


BATMAN, WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT WAS THAT IN THE TREE?
NOTHING... NOTHING AT ALL...
THERE MUST BE AN EXPLANATION!

SWIFTLY, UNEVENTFULLY, THE HOURS FLY BY. THE LONG NIGHT HAS TURNED TO DAY... AND DAY TO TWILIGHT... BUT THE BATMAN'S SLEEPLESS, TORMENTED VIGIL GOES ON...
AT HIS PENTHOUSE HOME, HIGH ABOVE GOTHAM -- WHERE HE LIVES INCOGNITO AS BRUCE WAYNE, PROMINENT FINANCIER AND MAN ABOUT TOWN -- HE LOOKS OUT OVER THE CITY, LOST IN THOUGHT...
THAT TREE STUNT ...WHY?... WHY?
JUST TO GET ME THERE?... TO CHALLENGE ME FACE TO FACE?
FIVE O'CLOCK... THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTMAS EVE... AND ALMOST TIME FOR THE BATMAN'S NOCTURNAL TOUR... AS A LIGHT SNOW FALLS...
BEG PARDON, SIR... BUT I'M GETTING A BIT WORRIED ABOUT MASTER DICK!
WHAT ABOUT HIM? AREN'T HE AND LORI COMING IN FROM HUDSON TO JOIN US TOMORROW?
YES, SIR, BUT MASTER DICK CAME IN EARLIER THIS AFTERNOON FOR SOME LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING... BEFORE MISS LORI GETS HERE TOMORROW!
AND SO--?
IT SEEMS HE HASN'T BOUGHT HER A GIFT YET--
WELL, SIR, HE PHONED FROM GOTHAM AIRPORT HOURS AGO! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE KEEPING HIM?
ALFRED, I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON MY MIND!
JUST THEN...
THE DOORBELL! PERHAPS--?
RRIING
RIING
A MOMENT LATER...
SIR, MASTER DICK IS HERE-- BUT HE--HE--
YOU'D BETTER COME QUICKLY, SIR!
LOOK AT HIM, SIR! LISTEN TO HIM--
MASTER DICK-- WHERE IS THE GIFT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BUY FOR MISS LORI?
GIFT? YES, THE GIFT!
ALFRED, HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE? CAN'T QUITE FIGURE IT!
GIFT? WHAT FOR?

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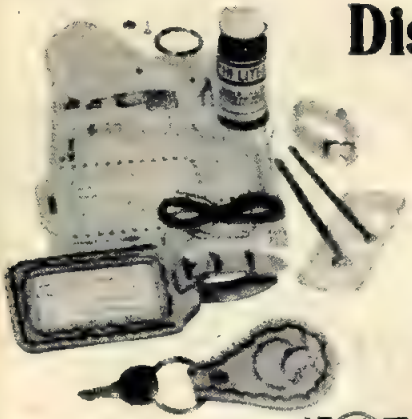

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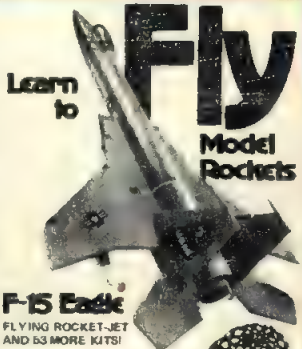

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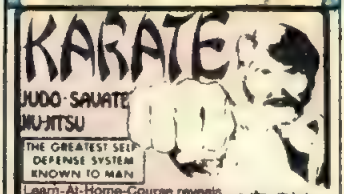

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AND NOW...
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When you've got just one comic and a lot of time to kill, what is the only thing you can do?

Right. Read the comic again.

But supposing you've read it not just twice but three times, decided who wrote the jerkiest letter on the letters page and spent at least three minutes wondering if those X-ray Spex **really** work and if so why haven't you sent away for them already? What then?

Well, in desperation, you might turn again to the beginning and read the old familiar names in tiny type at the bottom of page one. Sol Harrison, Jack Adler—yep. It's the same old DC. But wait. Wasn't Sol Vice-President before? It says President now. And Jack's Vice-President. And Joe Orlando's not just an editor, he's **managing** editor. And Vince Colletta's art director, and Paul Levitz is some impressive-sounding thing called editorial coordinator. Even a dingbat of modest intelligence can tell some kind of change is going on.

A more astute dingbat may notice something else. One of the old familiar names is nowhere to be found. And there in its place is a new name, never before seen in comics. Jenette Kahn. All signs seem to indicate that an unknown person of presumably female persuasion has become publisher of DC. . . .

The inevitable questions arise. Who is she anyway? Does she have the necessary qualifications to be publisher of the largest comic company in the world? Can she type?

Yes. I can. Ten words a minute using two fingers. I also started three magazines which—strange to say—you might well be hoarding right next to your most prized comics.

Those of you tottering on the brink of second childhood will remember KIDS which I began seven years ago. It was—dare I say it—one of those truly nifty ideas—a magazine written and illustrated by kids for each other.

Everybody loved it. It was an enormous critical success. It also lost money. I learned four hundred and twenty-seven creative mistakes never to foist on a business again. This encouraged me to start another magazine. I figured there were only so many errors one could make and I had used up a lot.

The new magazine was called DYNAMITE. DYNAMITE not only was one of those (dare I say it again?) truly nifty ideas. It was an enormous critical success . . . and it just happened to make money hand over fist.

Meanwhile, Xerox had jealously watched the explosion of DYNAMITE. Since they'd built a business on copying, they were not adverse to reproducing DYNAMITE's success. We became partners in SMASH, my third magazine. And it was while I was happily ensconced in SMASH's secret headquarters in upper Manhattan that Warner Publishing's Morgan Edge asked me how I'd like to be DC's Perry White.

You're right. Dare I say it still one more time? It was one of those truly nifty ideas. I said yes.

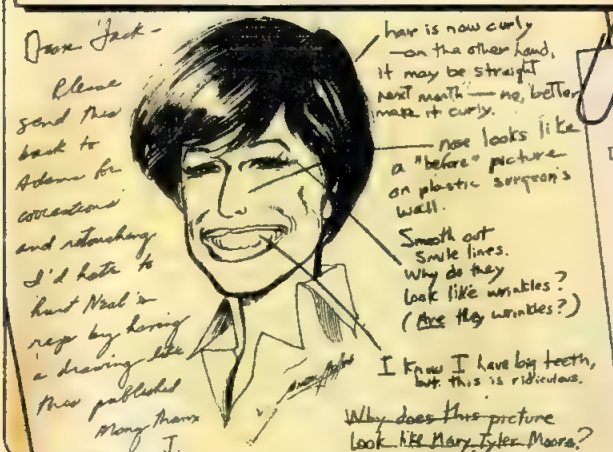
And that is my history in brief. In issues to come, I'll be mixing other equally relevant personal details (tonsils removed: November 8, 1954) with the stuff that truly counts—what's happening here at Dynamic DC.

Until then, don't forget that you can tune in weekly on what we're putting out by calling our toll free Direct Currents Hot Line. It's 800-223-7760 no matter where you're calling from. Unless it's New York. In which case you should dial 800-442-8180.

Since it's December, I get to end my first public note by saying all kinds of nice things. To all of you out there—the happiest of holidays and the best of new years. Not just from me, but from the whole gang at DC.

Take Care—

Jenette


Dear Jack -
Please send this back to Adams for corrections and retouching. I'd hate to have Neal's rep hurt by having a drawing like this published.
Many thanx
J.
hair is now curly — on the other hand, it may be straight next month — no, better make it curly.
— nose looks like a "before" picture on plastic surgeon's wall.
Smooth out smile lines. Why do they look like wrinkles? (Are they wrinkles?)
I know I have big teeth, but this is ridiculous.
Why does this picture look like Mary Tyler Moore?

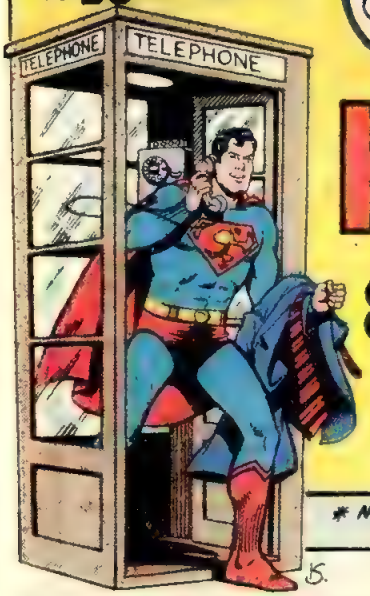
FROM THE DESK OF
JACK ADLER

DEAR JENETTE -

I WILL SEE TO IT THAT THIS DRAWING OF YOU BY NEAL IS NEVER PRINTED. NEAL IS AT THIS MOMENT MAKING THE CORRECTIONS YOU INDICATED AND I WILL USE THE CORRECTED ART AS SOON AS IT COMES BACK FROM HIS STUDIO.

Jack

NOW YOU CAN CALL TOLL-FREE TO DC ON THE...



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YES? WELL, TOO BAD... CAN'T IMAGINE WHY I CHOSE THIS WEEK-END... CHOSE... TO COME IN...
HI, BRUCE! GOING SOMEPLACE... OR WAS I? LOOKS LIKE I'M DRESSED FOR IT!
HE'S DEAD SERIOUS... PERFECTLY SOBER... BUT HE CAN'T RETAIN A THOUGHT FROM ONE MOMENT TO THE NEXT!
DICK, TRY TO FOCUS ON ME!
SURE--
ALFRED, GET ME MY MEDICAL--
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SORTING THE MAIL, SIR. ANYTHING WRONG, SIR?
'GOOD HEAVENS-- LOOK WHO'S HERE-- MASTER DICK! WHAT BRINGS YOU TO TOWN? WHY DIDN'T YOU PHONE?
ALFRED, OLD FRIEND, NICE TO SEE YOU! WELL, WELL, I'M HERE, AREN'T I? WHAT ABOUT THE MAIL?
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE?
WHAT MAIL, MASTER DICK?
HERE, SIR? OF COURSE, THE MAIL!
?!?

SHORTLY THEREAFTER--
LOOK AT THE TRAFFIC! BY THIS TIME ON CHRISTMAS EVE, EVERYBODY IS HOME-- BUT NOT TONIGHT!
RESTAURANTS AND NIGHT CLUBS CROWDED... THE CHURCHES EMPTY... AND SCARCELY A CHRISTMAS LIGHT ANYWHERE!
NO ONE NOTICES ME! THEY'RE BEWILDERED... HUNG UP! THE DRIVERS CAN'T REMEMBER THE LIGHTS LONG ENOUGH TO REACT!
HEADQUARTERS EITHER DOESN'T ANSWER -- OR RAMBLES ON INCOHERENTLY WHEN IT DOES!
STOP
AND THAT SANTA CLAUS-- JUST LIKE DICK AND ALFRED... BARELY FUNCTIONING... AS THOUGH SEIZED BY SOME STRANGE MALADY... FROM WHICH I ALONE HAVE BEEN SPARED!
COMPLETE INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE -- PSYCHATAXIA -- EXACTLY WHAT I INDUCE IN TZIN-TZIN WHEN HE WAS IN JAIL!
I AM GOING TO ROB THIS CITY OF SOMETHING YOU CAN NEVER RECOVER --
BY THIS YOU WILL REMEMBER ME-- WHEN YOU MOST WANT TO FORGET!
GOOD LORD! THIS MUST BE TZIN-TZIN'S MONSTROUS REVENGE -- AND I'M THE ONLY ONE IN GOTHAM WHO KNOWS IT!
HE'S ROBBING GOTHAM CITY OF ITS CHRISTMAS!

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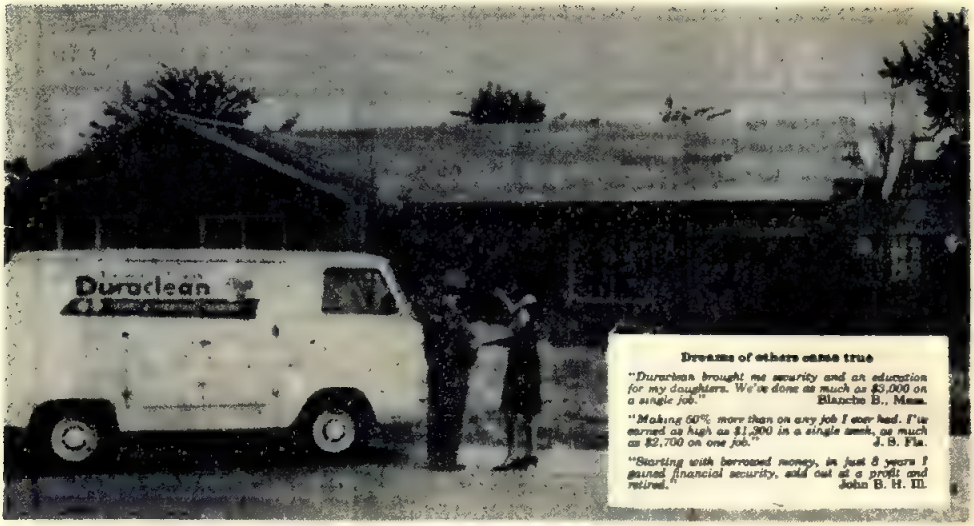
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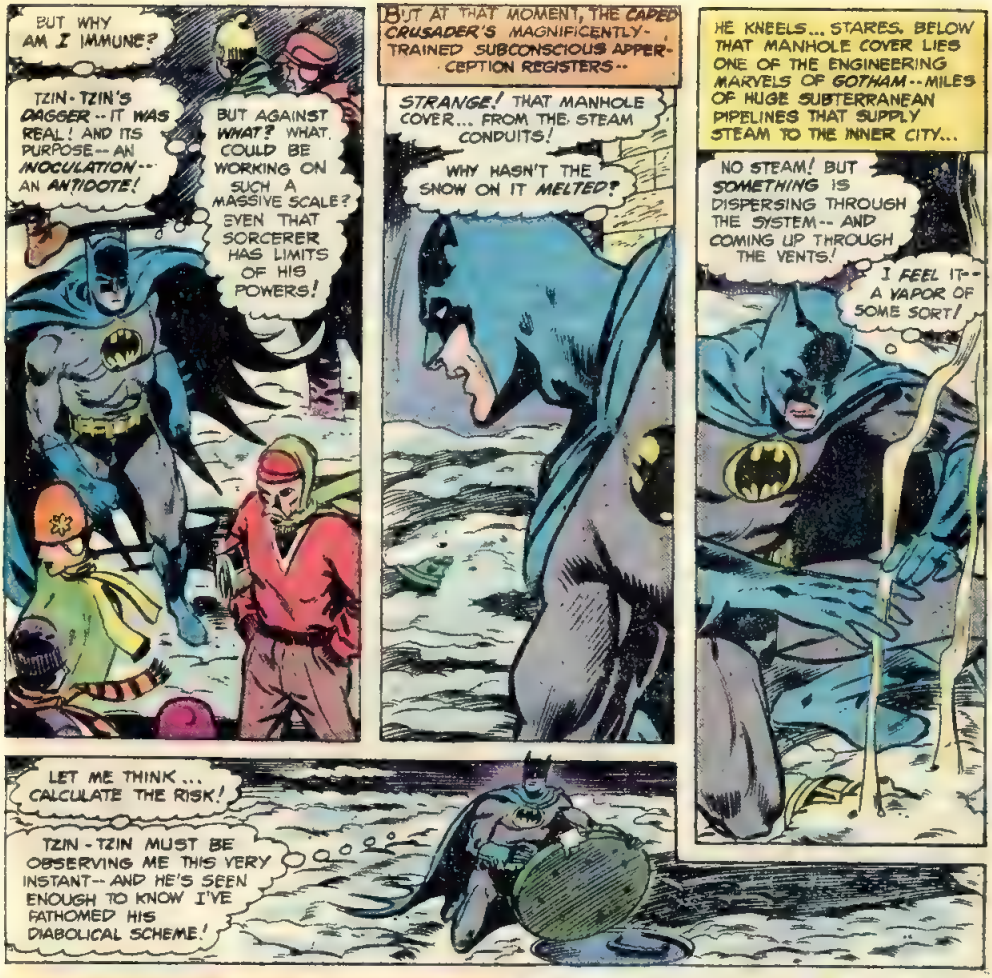
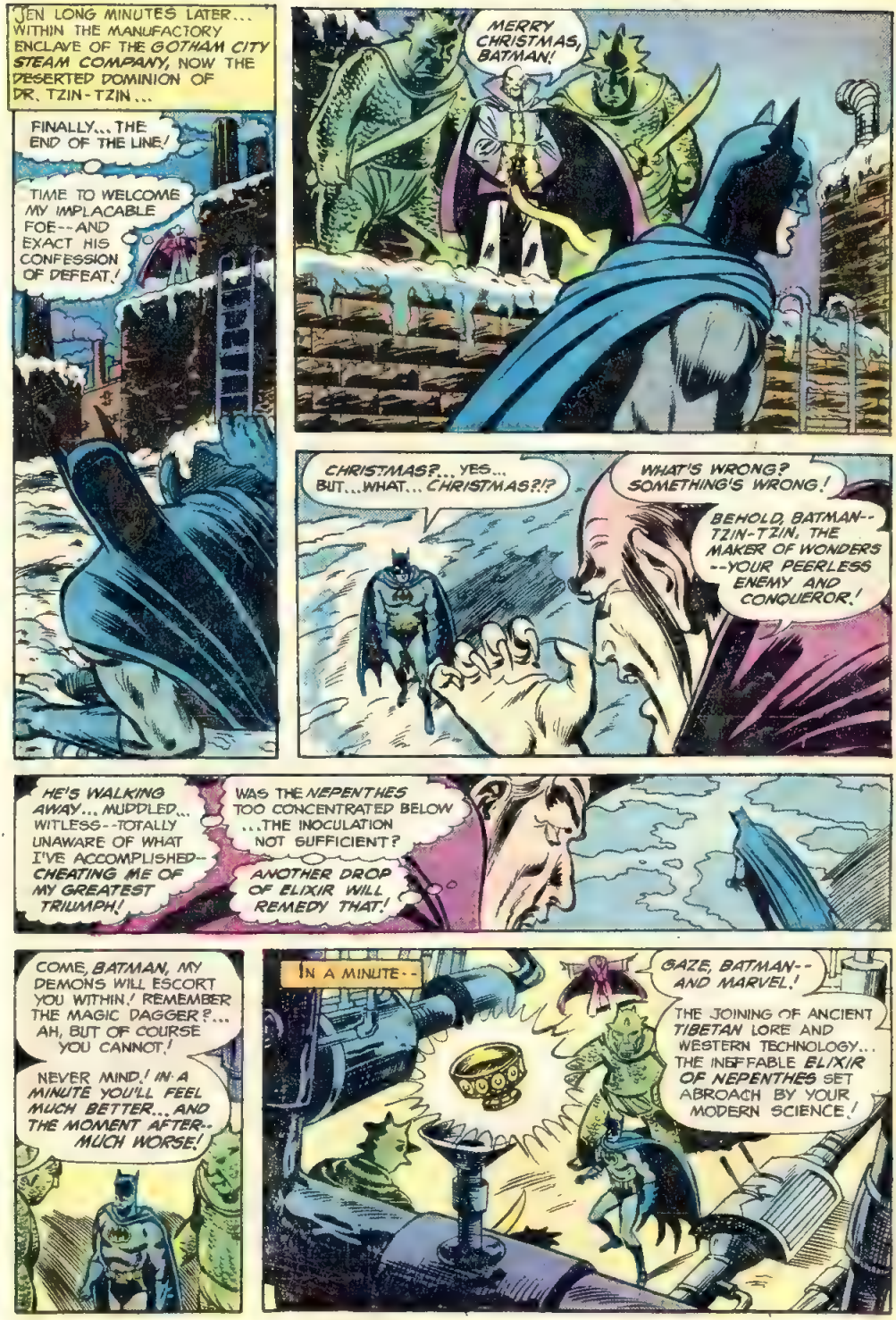

BUT WHY AM I IMMUNE?
TZIN-TZIN'S DAGGER--IT WAS REAL! AND ITS PURPOSE--AN INOCULATION--AN ANTIDOTE!
BUT AGAINST WHAT? WHAT COULD BE WORKING ON SUCH A MASSIVE SCALE? EVEN THAT SORCERER HAS LIMITS OF HIS POWERS!
BUT AT THAT MOMENT, THE CAPED CRUSADER'S MAGNIFICENTLY-TRAINED SUBCONSCIOUS APPERCEPTION REGISTERS--
STRANGE! THAT MANHOLE COVER... FROM THE STEAM CONDUITS!
WHY HASN'T THE SNOW ON IT MELTED?
HE KNEELS... STARES. BELOW THAT MANHOLE COVER LIES ONE OF THE ENGINEERING MARVELS OF GOTHAM--MILES OF HUGE SUBTERRANEAN PIPELINES THAT SUPPLY STEAM TO THE INNER CITY...
NO STEAM! BUT SOMETHING IS DISPERSING THROUGH THE SYSTEM--AND COMING UP THROUGH THE VENTS!
I FEEL IT--A VAPOR OF SOME SORT!
LET ME THINK... CALCULATE THE RISK!
TZIN-TZIN MUST BE OBSERVING ME THIS VERY INSTANT--AND HE'S SEEN ENOUGH TO KNOW I'VE FATHOMED HIS DIABOLICAL SCHEME!

AND STILL ONCE MORE, RIGHT AGAIN, BATMAN! PERHAPS FOR THE LAST TIME--FOR AS YOU GO INTO ACTION--
HE'S GOING DOWN INTO THE PIPES! EVEN MORE WONDERFUL THAN I PLANNED!
THE BATMAN NOT ONLY KNOWS WHAT I'VE DONE BUT--IN PART--HOW I'VE DONE IT!

BRILLIANT AS HE IS, WHAT DOES HE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH--WORK HIS WAY UNDERGROUND TO THE STEAM PLANT?


TEN LONG MINUTES LATER... WITHIN THE MANUFACTORY ENCLAVE OF THE GOTHAM CITY STEAM COMPANY, NOW THE DESERTED DOMINION OF DR. TZIN-TZIN...
FINALLY... THE END OF THE LINE!
TIME TO WELCOME MY IMPLACABLE FOE--AND EXACT HIS CONFESSION OF DEFEAT!
MERRY CHRISTMAS, BATMAN!
CHRISTMAS?... YES... BUT...WHAT... CHRISTMAS?!?
WHAT'S WRONG? SOMETHING'S WRONG!
BEHOLD, BATMAN--TZIN-TZIN, THE MAKER OF WONDERS --YOUR PEERLESS ENEMY AND CONQUEROR!
HE'S WALKING AWAY... MUDDLED... WITLESS--TOTALLY UNAWARE OF WHAT I'VE ACCOMPLISHED--CHEATING ME OF MY GREATEST TRIUMPH!
WAS THE NEPENTHES TOO CONCENTRATED BELOW ...THE INOCULATION NOT SUFFICIENT?
ANOTHER DROP OF ELIXIR WILL REMEDY THAT!
COME, BATMAN, MY DEMONS WILL ESCORT YOU WITHIN! REMEMBER THE MAGIC DAGGER?... AH, BUT OF COURSE YOU CANNOT!
NEVER MIND! IN A MINUTE YOU'LL FEEL MUCH BETTER... AND THE MOMENT AFTER--MUCH WORSE!
IN A MINUTE--
GAZE, BATMAN--AND MARVEL!
THE JOINING OF ANCIENT TIBETAN LORE AND WESTERN TECHNOLOGY... THE INEFFABLE ELIXIR OF NEPENTHES SET ABROACH BY YOUR MODERN SCIENCE!

--AND THE MOMENT AFTER...
YOU WERE ONLY HALF RIGHT, TZIN-TZIN! I DO FEEL MUCH BETTER!
POWER
WHAAAMM
BUT YOU FEEL MUCH WORSE!
TRICKED! DUPED BY YOUR TREACHERY!
PERFIDIOUS BATMAN--YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS!
I MUST REMEMBER... THESE DEMONS ARE APPARITIONS!
AND TO QUOTE AN OLD AMERICAN PROVERB--
--NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE 'EM--
--THEY'RE STILL BALONEY!
HUH?! THE SCIMITARS--REAL?!?

SINCE THEY SEEM TO WORK--I'LL TAKE THESE TWO!
WHAT NOW, BATMAN?
DOZENS OF DEMONS...OF ALL SIZES AND SHAPES!
I DON'T THINK I CAN MAKE THIS SCENE!
--UNLESS THERE'S ENOUGH STEAM LEFT IN--
PRESSURE VALVE
AIIEEEE
SWOOOSHH
AS THE SWIRLING MISTS CLEAR...
I'M DYING, BATMAN! DO SOMETHING!
COOL IT, TZIN-TZIN, YOU'LL LIVE... UNFORTUNATELY!

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SEND SECRET MESSAGES TO YOUR FRIENDS... IT'S GREAT FUN!

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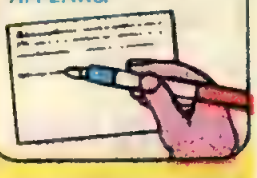
- WRITE SECRET MESSAGES

RUB WITH BLUE CAPPED END AND MESSAGE MAGICALLY APPEARS.



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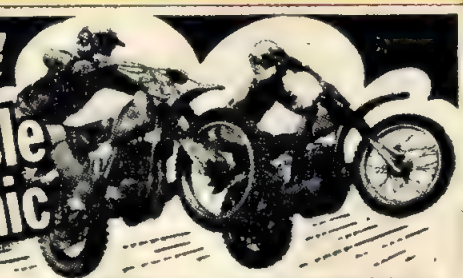

If you like to ride a cycle for fun . . . learn how to fix it for profit! Can you imagine a better way to earn your living? And to make it even better, the pay is **great**—whether you choose to work in a cycle shop for someone else or decide to start your own cycle repair business.

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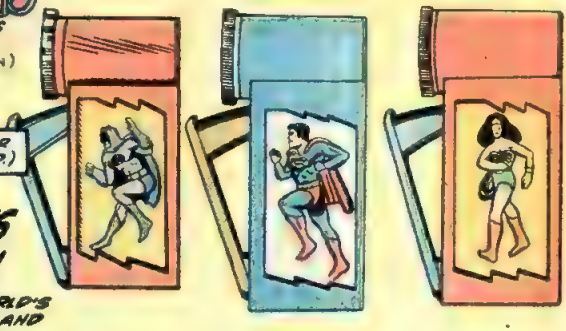

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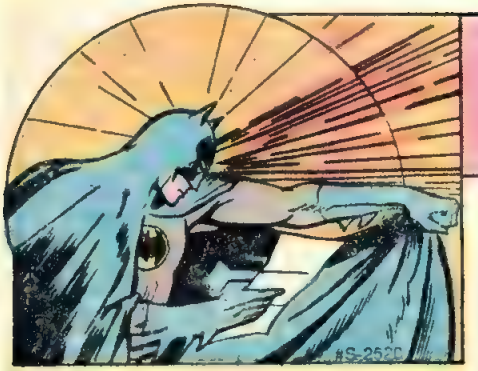
IT IS OVER NOW...AND THE CAPED CRUSADER IS HOME FOR CHRISTMAS...
TWO THINGS HAD TO HAPPEN--TZIN-TZIN HAD TO MAKE A MISTAKE--AND I HAD TO FIND IT AND TAKE IMMEDIATE ADVANTAGE!
HE'D ALREADY MISCALCULATED ONCE--THE SNOWFALL! WITHOUT THAT, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN LED TO THE STEAM-PIPES!
SO I THOUGHT, IF I DESCENDED INTO THOSE PIPES, PERHAPS HE COULD BE PERSUADED I'D BEEN OVERCOME... NEEDED MORE ANTIDOTE...
...AND HE MIGHT GET CARELESS ABOUT LETTING ME APPROACH WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE!
BEAUTIFUL, ALFRED! YOUR BEST TREE EVER!
COME, LET'S GO OUTSIDE AND LISTEN TO THE CARILLON CONCERT FROM THE CATHEDRAL!
MASTER BRUCE, AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT KEEPING DR. TZIN-TZIN IN CUSTODY?
HARDLY, ALFRED. THE NEW SKIN HE'LL BE GROWING WILL ITCH HIM ENOUGH TO MAKE HIS TSAL CONCENTRATION IMPOSSIBLE FOR MONTHS!
WE'LL START WORRYING THEN!
WELL, IT'S A HAPPY ENDING FOR EVERYONE BUT ME! I NOT ONLY MISSED OUT ON TZIN-TZIN'S GREATEST CAPER--BUT I NEVER DID GET THAT GIFT FOR LORI!
HOW ABOUT THESE PEARLS, DICK--FROM MY AHEM EMERGENCY GIFT CACHE! THINK THEY'LL DO?
DO?--THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL! SHE'LL FLIP!
BESIDES, SHE'LL BE GETTING SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL WHEN SHE GETS HERE TOMORROW--CHRISTMAS DAY, 1976!
AND THAT, AS DR. TZIN-TZIN HIMSELF SAID, IS SOMETHING INFINITELY PRECIOUS AND IRREPLACEABLE!
END



LETTERS to the BATMAN

c/o NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.,
75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019.

Dear Editor:

Paul Emrath's letter concerning the taming of the **Batman's** fury in recent months is, perhaps, founded to an appreciable degree. **The Batman** isn't quite the masked terror that he used to be when handled by other authors.

However despite this, perhaps there was a turn for the better in **BATMAN #281's** "Murder Comes in Black Boxes!" Very good, I must say. The story had so much going for it—elements which should adorn all of **The Batman's** adventures.

To begin with, violence is perpetrated with a spicy ingredient of mystery and foreign agents. Introduce the lovely fiancee of one of the deceased—a possible suspect! Yes, yes! Mystery—the hallmark of **The Batman!** Follow-up action with a high-speed chase across the bridge in **Batman's** home environment. Then, at the houseboat, organized crime takes a hand, but the Caped Crusader, aware of their tactics, responds with equal professionalism and smashes them. Escape—and we see **Batman's** disdain for the use of a gun. And then we're off to Budapest. More international intrigue! Disguised, the Gotham Goliath makes his way to . . . instant action! He's in an Iron Curtain country, proving that **The Batman** is everywhere and anywhere, pursuing justice. A missing nuclear scientist—action—escape—and capture?

There was so much in this tale that it was delightful! Perhaps some of **The Batman's** "evil eye" wasn't present, but so much else was. We can't expect everything! **The Batman's** gone through some changes, but always towards a better presentation.

CHRISTOPHER PHILLIP JURICICH
2116 Hillside Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010

(As we hoped, reader Emrath's letter in #281 sparked a bit of controversy among our readers—something we try for each time out! So, after you've perused the comments in this issue's lettercol, why not drop us a note on how YOU feel Batman should be handled: as the moody, mysterious shadow of the night or the more dynamic, forceful costumed crimebuster—or something else?—BR)

* * * * *

Dear Editor Schwartz:

I liked **BATMAN #281.** I liked the splash-page. And I like Mr. Reed. (Is he single?)

"Murder Comes in Black Boxes" had a terrific beginning; there's something about the sight of **Batman** riding a set of coffins talking with them, and the mysterious meeting on the corner leading to three sudden deaths which is pleasing to the imagination. (Now you know MY mental make-up: Odd!) It was an intriguing beginning.

The real, night-roaming **Bat** of the Night was all there: the woman who had been engaged to one of the deceased. her accusation of **Batman** . . . the attempted assassination of the Darknight Detective. and, of course, **Batman's** refusal to shoot a gun at the rapidly retreating crooks. Classic stuff!

There's no thickening of a plot like the thickening of a Reed plot. Hungarian freedom fighters indeed! Rarely does **The Batman** get out of Gotham these days, so that in itself was a refreshing change. And to my knowledge, **Batman** has never tangled with secret police before, especially those of a Communist nation.

Succinct and to the point, that's the description of **BATMAN #281.** Both Reed and **Bats** himself were at their best.

ELIZABETH M. SMITH, 13224 S "C"
Tacoma, WA 98444

(The happily-married Mr. Reed thanks you—and promises to keep on thickening those plots!—BR)

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Fortunately, David V. Reed's story in **BATMAN #281** was much better than Ernie Chua's cover. The first few pages were very good and set the pace for the rest of "Murder Comes in Black Boxes!" The lack of any dialogue on page 2 particularly caught my attention. This put an air of mystery around the three murders that was to remain throughout the book.

A car chase, as you have pointed out before, is one of the main ingredients in a motion picture, but seldom comes across sucessfully in comics. David and Ernie did **#281's** with great finesse this issue. In just those few panels, I was totally absorbed in the action. Again, the lack of dialogue benefitted the sequence.

It was great to see **Batman** get out of Gotham for a change. So often he seems to be just another policeman instead of an independent detective. More of it, please!

MIKE WHITE, 207 West Fast, Mackinaw, IL 61755

(Batman gets out of Gotham in his *JUSTICE LEAGUE* adventures—and sometimes right out of this world!—BR)

Dear Editor: * * * * *

Like Paul Emrath, I would like to see the return of the "Dark, fearsome creature of the night", but until that is possible, David V. Reed's version is just fine! By the way, I've heard that Steve Englehart will be doing some **Batman**-scripting. When. and where?

ROD McLAUGHLIN, 28 Palmer St., Ramsay, MT 59748

(Steve, whose work is currently on display in our new *GIANT JUSTICE LEAGUE*—now on sale—makes his Bat-bow in *DETECTIVE #469.* But while you're waiting for that issue, pick up *#468*, on sale at the end of December, to see still another interpretation of *The Batman*, that of—Bob Rozakis!)

NOW! JONAH HEX IS OUT ON HIS OWN! WATCH FOR THE FIRST ISSUE!

FREE DAILY PLANET FREE

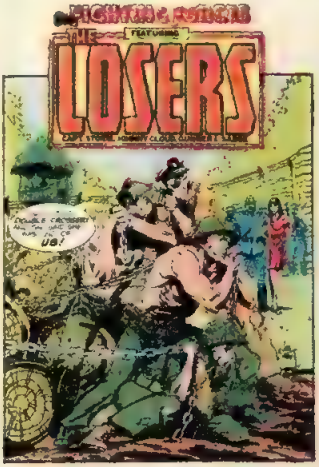
VOLUME 76 ISSUE 32 WEEK OF DECEMBER 6, 1976 BOB ROZAKIS: EDITOR ANTHONY TOLLIN: PRODUCTION

LOSERS LURED INTO ENEMY HANDS!

DOUBLE-AGENT TRAPS QUARTET (Brisbane, Australia—World War II) —Lt. Rita Bridey charmed the four members of the fighting team called *The Losers* ... and they were delighted when she was assigned to join them on a mission to a Japanese-held island!

But her beauty was their downfall, as she betrayed *Captain Storm, Johnny Cloud, Gunner* and *Sarge* into the hands of the masters of the island. Don't miss the Bob Kanigher/George Evans tale of "The Two-Headed Spy" in *OUR FIGHTING FORCES #172*, on sale the week of December 13th.

And also in the issue, *Gunner* and *Sarge* are reunited with an old battle comrade in "A Purple Heart for Pooch" by Bart Regan and E.R. Cruz.



DIRECT CURRENTS

ON SALE WEEK OF DEC. 13th

SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS #6—Captain Cold! Captain Boomerang! Captain Stingaree! Together they form a team called "Captains Cataclysmic" and it's up to *Captain Comet* and *Black Canary* to stop them in this Bob Rozakis/Rich Buckler/Bob Layton tale.

SHAZAM #28—Dr. Sivana's got another recruit in "The Return of Black Adam" as *Captain Marvel* journeys to Boston in this E. Nelson Bridwell/Kurt Schaffenberger story.

AND ON SALE RIGHT NOW:

BATMAN #285/JUSTICE LEAGUE #140 (now GIANT-SIZED and ALL-NEW)/*KARATE KID #7/KUNG FU FIGHTER #14/SUPERMAN #309/ WEIRD WAR TALES #61/ KOTTER #3*

TRIVIA QUIZ #32

SUPERMAN FAMILY is a big talk this week, so let's see what you know about the Man of Steel's co-stars. Do you know police inspector Henderson's first name? And how about Ma and Pa Kent's? The answers will appear in the next week's *PLANET!* ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: *Dr. Moon* tangled with *Batman* and *Wonder Woman* before taking on *Richard Dragon.*

JONAH HEX HITS THE SOLO TRAIL!

(The Old West)—It took him a long time, but the star of *WEIRD WESTERN TALES* has finally ridden out of that book!

But don't fret over it—because now *JONAH HEX* has a magazine all his own! And to kick off his solo status, he's out to gain "Vengeance for a Fallen Gladiator". *#1* goes on sale the week of December 13th. Michael Fleisher and Jose Luis Garcia Lopez have turned in another masterpiece in this series that wins fans among people who don't like western comics! If you've never seen an issue, this is the place to start—so be on the lookout for *JONAH HEX #1!*

FISTSFUL OF FEATURES FILL SUPER-SIZED ISSUES!

(DC, New York)—You've no doubt seen our full-page ad elsewhere in the issue for our two all-new super-sized magazines: *SUPERMAN FAMILY* and *HOUSE OF MYSTERY* And we're hoping you're putting away a couple of bucks so you'll be the first of your group to get 'em! But just in case you're still a little hesitant, here's a run-down on just what you're going to find in that dynamic duo of issues.

SUPERMAN FAMILY starts off with a pair of *Jimmy Olsen* tales, "Death on Ice" by Bill Dennehy, Kurt Schaffenberger and Vince Colletta and "Reporter with the Radar Mind" by Cary Bates, Schaffenberger and Colletta. Then, *Supergirl* journeys to the Red Planet in search of the "Deadly Treasure of Mars" and comes face-to-face with a most unexpected foe in a Jack C. Harris/Mike Vosburg/Al Milgrom tale. And the third of our stars, *Lois Lane*, is on hand when "Crime Takes a Fall" thanks to Bill Kunkel, Jose Delbo and Bob Layton. But that still isn't all! E. Nelson Bridwell, John Calnan and Joe Giella present the story of "Superbaby's Alien Pet"; *Krypto* plays a part in "A Bad Day for Junkyard Blue" by Bob Toomey, Calnan and Bob Smith; and Paul Kupperberg, Marshall Rogers and Dan Greene present a tale of the Fabulous World of Krypton, "The Stranger!"

Sold on that one? Good—now listen to the *HOUSE OF MYSTERY* line-up of brand-new shockers: "Return of the Vampire" by Jack Oleck and Franc Reyes; "The Collector" by David V. Reed and Wally Wood; "Bride of the Pharoah" by Maxene Fabe: "Fear Wore Two Faces" by George Kashdan and Jess Jodloman; "Ghostly Games" by Steve Skeates, Ernie Chua and Bill Draut; "A House is Not a Haunt" by Paul Levitz, Mike Uslan and Quico Redondo; and "Harvest of Hate" by Oleck and Alfredo Alcala. Plus: Cain's Game Room, Secrets of the House of Mystery, a HOM Maze by Bob Rozakis and a continuing saga of Cain and Abel served up by Paul Kupperberg and Romeo Tanghal.

We've hooked you now, haven't we? Fine—so you better run ... not walk . run to your comics dealer the week of December 13th and get your copies of *SUPERMAN FAMILY #182* and *HOUSE OF MYSTERY #251!*

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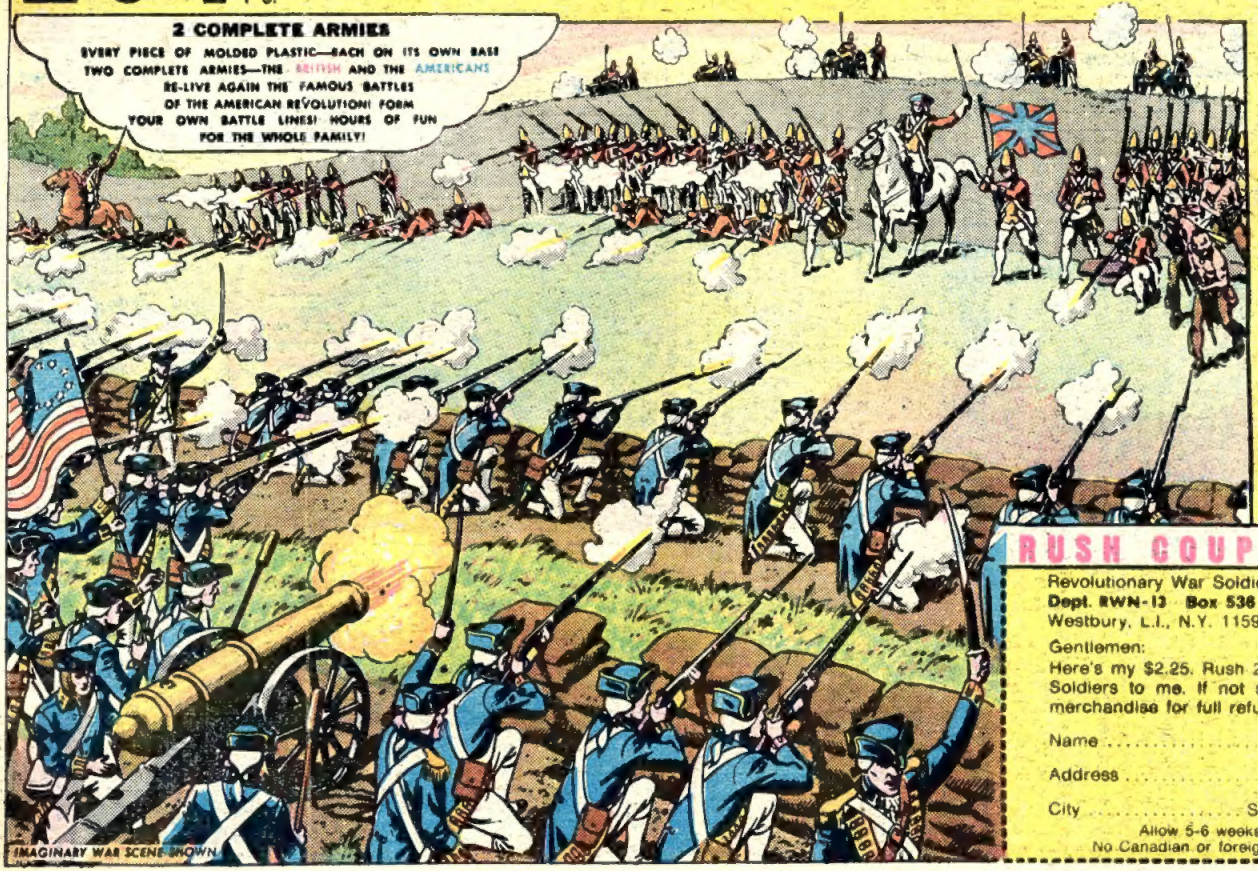

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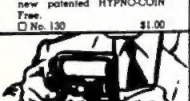

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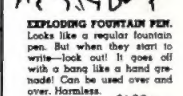

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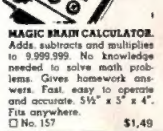

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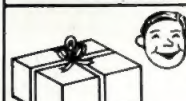

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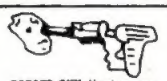

POTATO GUN. Here's a new, fast action gun that shoots potato pellets as far as 50 ft. with more than 300 shots from a single potato. Absolutely harmless . . . and you never run out of ammo.
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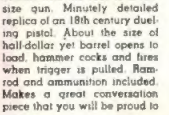
MAGIC SOAP POWDER. Sprinkle a little of this almost invisible magic powder on any soap. When anyone uses the soap their hands and face will turn bloody red. Have fun! Drives them crazy! Harmless!
☐ No. 123 30¢ pkg.
4 pkg's $1.00



ATOM PISTOL. Fires real blanks with the roar of a full-size gun. Minutely detailed replica of an 18th century dueling pistol. About the size of half-dollar yet barrel opens to load, hammer cocks and fires when trigger is pulled. Ramrod and ammunition included. Makes a great conversation piece that you will be proud to own.
☐ No. 135 $1.98
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SPY-SCOPE. No larger than a fountain pen, spots objects blocks away. Excellent for all sports, counter-spying, baseball, hikers. Power lenses optically ground to reproduce every detail. 8-power telescope, also converts into a 30-power microscope.
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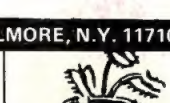
IT'S 10 INSTRUMENTS IN ONE. Every hobbyist, camper, sports fan, hunter, scout, will want one. You get all the following in this little (only 3½" when folded) wonder! 1 — Reading lens. 2—Compound microscope. 3 — Adjustable telescope. 4 — Focusing binoculars. 5- -Directional compass. 6 - Solar time clock. 7—Flat mirror. 8 -Magnifying mirror. 9 --Fire lighter. 10—Code transmitter.
☐ No. 776 $1.00



FLESH EATING PLANTS. Most unusual plant in the world. Eats flies, bugs, spiders, etc. Feeds itself by trapping and eating these insects. Jaws will snap shut on anything at your command. Easy to grow with special soil and full instruction included.
☐ No. 760 $1.00

SNEEZING POWDER. Place a little of this powder on your hand, blow into the air, step back and watch the fun begin. Everyone in the room will begin to sneeze without knowing why. More fun than a barrel full of monkeys.
☐ No. 104 30¢ pkg.
4 pkg's $1.00

REDMOUTH GUM. Be the first in your neighborhood to use this fiendish joke. Victim will look like he ate red paint, and all from an innocent looking piece of gum. Perfectly safe. Non-toxic. Loads of fun.
☐ No. 794 10 Sticks $1.00

SECRET AGENT SPY CAMERA. Easily concealed in the palm of your hand. Takes secret or surprise pictures as well as regular candid shots. Solid all metal construction. Precision ground lenses. Speed 1/25th of a second and time exposure. Takes 10 pictures
☐ No. 109 Camera only $1.98
☐ No. 110 Pigskin Case .79
☐ No. 112 Hi-Speed Film 2 Rolls - 20 shots $1.00

HOT PEPPER GUM. Flavored with delicious mint but hidden within the mint is RED HOT PEPPER! The more the chew the hotter it gets. Not harmful but a joke they'll remember. Package of 5 sticks.
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